

113.

INT. CHEAP COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Astrid sits across from Susan, who has a file open on the table in front of her. Astrid chain smokes.

SUSAN

Your mother's very proud of you for not quitting school, you know? You graduate soon, don't you?
(as Astrid nods)

Are you making plans for the future?

ASTRID

Yeah. I thought maybe I'd become a criminal lawyer.

SUSAN

Really.

ASTRID

Either that or a hooker or a garbage collector.

Susan stares at her.

SUSAN

Your mother said you'd be difficult.

ASTRID

Mother knows best.

SUSAN

Do you have any idea how much she's suffered since the system took you away?

ASTRID

(sneering)

I wasn't taken away. I'm like a car she parked when she was drunk. She just can't remember where she left it, that's all.

Susan takes a magazine from the folder and holds it out.

SUSAN

Would you like to see the interview they did with her in Artforum?

ASTRID

No.

Susan drops the magazine back on the table.

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SUSAN

I'm trying to get your mother a new trial.

ASTRID

How will you do that? She killed a man. She killed my foster mother, too.

SUSAN

How did she do that? She only met the woman once. Is she a sorcerer?

(tough)

Your mother was denied due process, the public defender was incompetent, the prosecution's case was all circumstantial and she was so drugged she could barely speak. Not only that, but Barry Kolker's autopsy was inconclusive. He was overweight and a drug user. He could easily have died of heart failure.

(impassioned)

A lot of people believe your mother's innocent. She has support in the art community, from feminists, academics...

(sticking it to her)

She's very close to two girls from Pomona College who visit her constantly. They're almost like her children.

ASTRID

How resourceful of her. She uses one kid up, then gets herself two new ones, nice clean ones with low mileage.

(hard)

What do you want from me? You want me to lie in court for her?

SUSAN

I want you to testify. You didn't in the first trial and your testimony could make the difference.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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SUSAN (CONT'D)

(off her silence)

Why do you hate her, Astrid?
Because you think she committed
murder or because you feel
abandoned?

(as Astrid goes
very still)

The truth is you never witnessed
a murder, but you do feel
abandoned.

Astrid stares at her, then smiles slightly.

ASTRID

You're good. Is that what you'll
say if I say she killed him?

SUSAN

Something like that.

ASTRID

(disgusted mutter)

She's so desperate she'd probably
pay me to get out of there.

Susan jumps at what seems to be an opening to an offer.

SUSAN

Yes, she would, so what do you
want? Money to go to college? A
car, a trip? There's money behind
her, just tell me what you want.

Appalled, Astrid stares at her, then stands up.

ASTRID

I want you to go back under your
rock and stay there. Creatures
like you don't survive in the sun.

She walks out.

INT. RENA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Astrid is at the table in the filthy kitchen painting
designs on the lid of an old suitcase as Rena pulls a
frozen dinner tray from the microwave.

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